

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 7/1/04
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If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

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Public Works Department

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SUBJECT: Update on Santa Barbara County Commercial and Multi-Family Recycling Program
All Supervisorial Districts

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1) Receive and file an update on the Santa Barbara County Commercial and Multi-Family Recycling Program.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation is primarily aligned with Goal No. 2: Ensure Public Health and Safety and Provide Essential Infrastructure

Executive Summary and Discussion:

Program Background

On October 15, 2002, your Board directed staff to return in two months with a specific plan for expanding the County's commercial and multi-family recycling programs. An existing stakeholders group was expanded to include 10 entities interested in the program ranging from property management associations to environmental organizations. Over the course of two months, the stakeholders prepared a plan that was presented to and approved by your Board on December 10, 2002. After Board approval of the program, stakeholders continued to meet to establish protocols for the program. The franchise agreements for the collection and transportation of waste were amended to include new service requirements and a financial incentive for better performance. These amendments were approved by your Board on June 3, 2003. Lastly, on June 17, 2003, your Board approved an amendment to the Solid Waste and Utilities Division Rules and Regulations to incorporate the protocols for the program. In addition, at this meeting, your Board directed

staff to return in one year to provide an update on the program’s progress. This Board Letter serves as the requested update.

Recycling Program Results

The program essentially requires all businesses and apartments to recycle. The level of recycling service depends on the type and quantity of waste generated. Implementation of the program began in September 2003. In September and October, County staff conducted an extension outreach campaign including newspaper and radio advertisements, newsletter articles, and presentations to interested associations and organizations. In addition, staff created posters, magnets, and flyers in English and Spanish for the service providers to distribute to customers when adding recycling service to a property. In October 2003, County staff sent letters to each business and apartment building that was not recycling encouraging them to participate in the program. A customer has the ability to subscribe to recycling service from their service provider or self-haul their recyclables to several facilities. In response to the letter, the service providers received hundreds of phone calls and spent the next several months setting up recycling programs for individual customers. In February 2004, a second letter was sent to the remaining non-recyclers which resulted in the adding of additional recyclers. Throughout the implementation process, County staff has met with the service providers on a monthly basis.

Overall, the service providers have been very successful in implementing the program. As indicated in the chart below, currently, there are a total of 1,465 eligible business and apartment customers (also known as “commercial” customers). Prior to the onset of the program, there were 446 commercial customers recycling (30% of the overall customer base). As of May 31, 2004, there are 1,214 commercial customers that are recycling. This is an increase of 768 customers, and approximately 83% of the overall commercial customer base! In addition, the service providers are collecting 100 tons more recyclables per month than before implementation. This quantity is expected to increase as the program matures. While the success of the program has been significant, working with each individual customer has taken the service providers longer than expected. Approximately 251 of the 1,465 eligible customers have yet to add recycling service.

	# of Recycling Customers	# of Non-Recycling Customers	Total # of Eligible Customers
Prior to September 2003			
	446	1,019	1,465
As of May 2004			
	1,214	251	1,465

Next Steps

In early July, all service providers provided County staff with a list of all customers that are currently not participating in the program. According to the protocol, County staff will directly contact each customer and explain the program and the fee for non-compliance (20% surcharge on the trash bill). A customer may request an exemption from the program if it is infeasible for them to participate in the program and County staff will review the request and ultimately accept or deny the request. If a customer has been explained the program, is not eligible for an exemption, and refuses to participate, the non-compliance fee will be assessed. It is estimated that all customers will be contacted by August 31, 2004 and the non-compliance fee will be assessed in September 2004, one year after implementation of the program.

Mandates and Service Levels:

This is an update on a previously approved program and therefore represents no change in service levels. The implementation of the program is assisting the County in meeting the 50% diversion requirement set by the California Integrated Waste Management Board. The County's confirmed diversion rate for 2002 is 62%. Data to tabulate the County's diversion rate for 2003 has not yet been released by the California State Department of Finance.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

No new staff was added to implement this program and state funding for recycling education was used to fund the outreach component of the program. At this time, the non-compliance fee has not been assessed. It is difficult to determine how many customers will eventually be assessed the fee for non-compliance as the program continues to be rolled out. Any revenue raised as a result of the fee will be sent directly to the Solid Waste & Utilities Division and will be used to continue to educate customers on the benefits of recycling and to encourage 100% compliance with the program.

Special Instructions:

None.